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26 August 1948

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director, Central Intelligence Agency

SUBJECT: CIA Trunk-Line Communications Facilities

1. Reference is made to memorandum dated 24 March 1948 from the Director to the AGCO, and reply thereto dated 8 April 1948 (copies attached), relative to base communications centers. This memorandum and the attached map constitute a report of progress to date in the establishment of CIA radio carrier facilities and of the future program, both firm and tentative. The Director's approval and/or comments on the program are requested.

2. Since the submission of the previous memorandum, the scope and types of covert CIA activities have been greatly expanded and the problems involved in communications support thus have become considerably clearer. There has resulted a much greater emphasis upon the necessity for CIA operated and controlled trunk-line facilities. It is apparent that the facilities of the Armed Services will not be adequate in times of emergency to effect transmission of CIA traffic in such a manner as to permit proper exercise by the Director of his command functions. The following paragraphs list present and proposed base stations with comments on the status of each:

a. Washington Base Station was initially established to serve the Latin American network only. It originally consisted of a receiver station only, utilizing [redacted]. By October 1948, the companion transmitter station will be in operation and per agreement, the use of [redacted] will be discontinued. Some expansion of the U. S. Washington Base Station will be required to enable it to serve as a terminus for traffic from Europe and the Middle East, in addition to Latin America, but it is shown on the accompanying map in blue because enlargement rather than total reconstruction would be required.

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b. [redacted] Base Station. Because continuous radio service throughout a 24 hour day is impossible across the North Atlantic, it is necessary to connect Washington with some Southern point, preferably not farther East than [redacted]. The soundest radio planning calls for a base in [redacted]. This base should be given top priority after those which are already under [redacted]

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c. The [redacted] Base is shown on the map as under construction. This is planned as a mobile base for which equipment and vehicles are in the process of construction, and on which negotiations with the [redacted] and [redacted] authorities are progressing favorably. It is hoped that this base will be ready for operation in the Spring or Summer of 1950.

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d. [redacted] Base Station: This existing "cold war" base is being enlarged to insure proper support of expanding cover operations behind the Iron Curtain and to provide capacity for traffic deception. The activities of this station could result in a considerable expenditure of Russian technician manpower should countermeasures be initiated by them. Under emergency conditions, this station could serve as a backup relay point for handling traffic to and from the Middle East, provided security barriers resulting from the different cover status of stations in each area could be surmounted or had to be disregarded due to the urgency of the traffic.

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e. [redacted] Base Station. This station is now under construction and should be completed in six to eight months. As soon as completed, the Middle East network will be reoriented [redacted] and, of far more importance, [redacted] will undertake the covert support of Eastern Mediterranean, including [redacted] Radio communications between Washington and [redacted] are planned by direct circuit as soon as the [redacted] base is in operation and necessary frequency channels for such service are obtained. This circuit should be replaced by relay through [redacted] base as soon as that station is activated.

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f. [redacted] Base Stations. The planning for more adequate support of Middle and Western Mediterranean operations by establishment of base facilities at these locations will be undertaken at a later date, since the establishment of the [redacted] Base and the reconstruction of Far Eastern communications have priority. In addition, the uncertainty as to friendly long term political control of each location limits present action to general planning.

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g. Far Eastern Base Facilities. Both planning and construction must be made as flexible as possible due to the changing political picture in the area. Distances and operational considerations dictate the early construction of a major base in some politically tenable area, preferably at the [redacted], with small stations capable of rapid movement at other locations such as [redacted]. A reserve of small stations would be held at the main base.

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h. Long range planning includes a second major Far Eastern Base, established if possible [redacted] for the support of operations in Central and Southeastern Asia and as a link in the CIA global carrier system. As planning and operations progress, small stations may be required at such places as [redacted]

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1. A Central Pacific Relay Station. Future planning includes this station as the final base in the world-wide CIA system for handling of intelligence reports and necessary administrative traffic.

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2. 4. In addition to the facilities described above, a limited number of mobile and air-transportable base stations are being procured for rapid dispatch to areas requiring immediate base facilities under emergency conditions, or to supplement or replace facilities damaged by enemy action, or to meet immediate operational requirements which cannot be serviced by the then existing base facilities.

5. Since this paper is a report on trunk-line facilities, no attempt has been made to show present or projected clandestine agent circuits, or special operational stations the activities of which require secure and rapid communications with Washington. However, the locations of the base stations listed have been selected only on the basis of closest coordination with operational planning.

6. The establishment of CIA trunk-line facilities outlined above is dependent upon the allocation to this organization of necessary frequencies for connecting these major radio communications centers. The frequency requirements will be presented initially by the Communications Division through existing channels, but it is anticipated that allocations of the magnitude involved will necessitate action by the Director at the highest governmental levels. A specific memorandum on the latter subject will be forwarded upon completion of the initial investigation.

7. The program herein is concurred in by the Assistant Director for Policy Coordination.

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Assistant Director
Special Operations

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